

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 2, 2011

Dear Tribal Leader:

In 2008, I visited the Crow Nation in Montana—one of the many times I met with tribal leaders on the campaign trail. The Crow adopted me and gave me the name “One Who Helps People Throughout the Land.” It was a tremendous honor, and as President, I have made it a priority to live up to that name and make sure every American has a voice in the White House, including Native Americans.

Americans everywhere are still struggling. As tribal leaders, you see this every day. But you also see what happens when we put our differences aside and confront our challenges together. You know change is possible. And as long as I have the honor of serving as your President, I will do everything in my power to listen to you, to strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship we share, and to make life better for every American.

That is why I have held the largest gatherings of tribal leaders in our history, and why I directed every Cabinet agency to consult more frequently with tribal nations. Since then, members of my Administration have engaged in an open and constructive dialogue about the issues facing Indian Country, and they have listened to your recommendations for how the Federal Government can do a better job serving our First Americans.

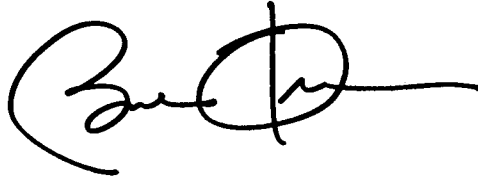
You told us about the need to improve health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives, which is why the Affordable Care Act I signed into law permanently reauthorizes the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

You told us you needed better law enforcement in your communities, which is why I signed into law the Tribal Law and Order Act to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the tribal justice systems and better prevent crime in tribal communities.

You told us you wanted to resolve longstanding cases and close an unfortunate chapter in our history, which is why the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice announced a settlement agreement with the plaintiffs in the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class action lawsuit. And last year, I proudly signed into law the Claims Resolution Act of 2010, which will at long last provide justice to those affected by the *Cobell v. Salazar* lawsuit. This law also settles four separate water rights suits, giving seven tribes in Arizona, Montana, and New Mexico permanent access to secure water supplies year round.

Together, we have made real progress. With your help, I am confident we will make even more in the months and years ahead. I believe we are seeing a turning point in the relationship between our nations, and I promise to do everything I can to fight for a brighter future for the First Americans and all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", with a large circular flourish on the left and a horizontal line extending to the right.